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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

INFORMATION REPORT

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COUNTRY USSR (Far East)

REPORT NO.

SUBJECT Traffic on the Trans-Siberian Railroad

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1. As of 1950, the railroad between Sverdlovsk (N 56-50, E 60-38) and Chita (N 52-03, E 113-30) was in considerably worse condition than it was further east. Traffic was very slow because of poor roadbeds; rolling stock was in a poor state of repair; and single tracks existed in many places, especially between Sverdlovsk and Novosibirsk (N 55-02, E 82-53). East of Chita the railroad was in fairly good condition and the trains moved appreciably faster.

2. Most of the traffic was freight, and much of this was military material. Principal items of a military nature noted on the railroad were aircraft, trucks, artillery, tanks, and small boats. The exact nature of the boats is not known, since they were usually covered with canvas. The most prominent military freight was fighter aircraft. It is easy to identify military trains because of the military guards they always carry. Aircraft and other military items were carried in both boxcars and open flat-cars, and in nearly all cases were moving eastward as of 1950. [redacted] that the 25X1 boats--which could have been landing craft, but which could not be positively identified because of the coverings--were destined for Komsomolsk (N 50-35, E 137-02).

3. It was very difficult to purchase a ticket for rail travel on the Trans-Siberian Railroad, because of the severe shortage of passenger trains. (Since 1950, this condition is understood to have improved only slightly.)

4. Rail transportation in the Far East is still a major problem for the USSR in spite of the completion of the BAM (Baykal-Amur Magistral). Rail transportation is too limited and slow to handle properly the needs of the area. Source has no knowledge of the BOM (Baykal-Okhotsk-Magistral) spur line.

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